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VERSES



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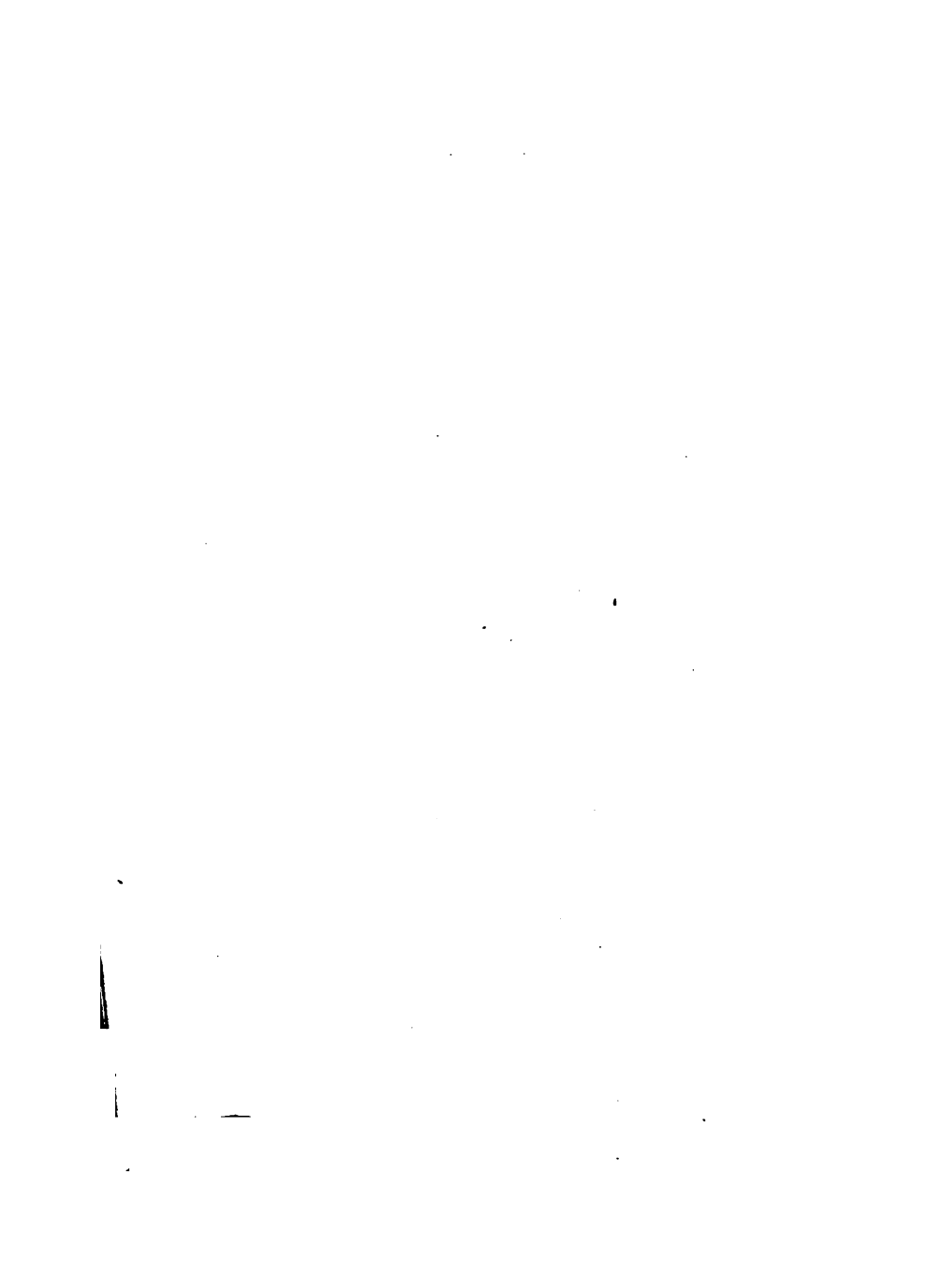


V E R S E S



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1874



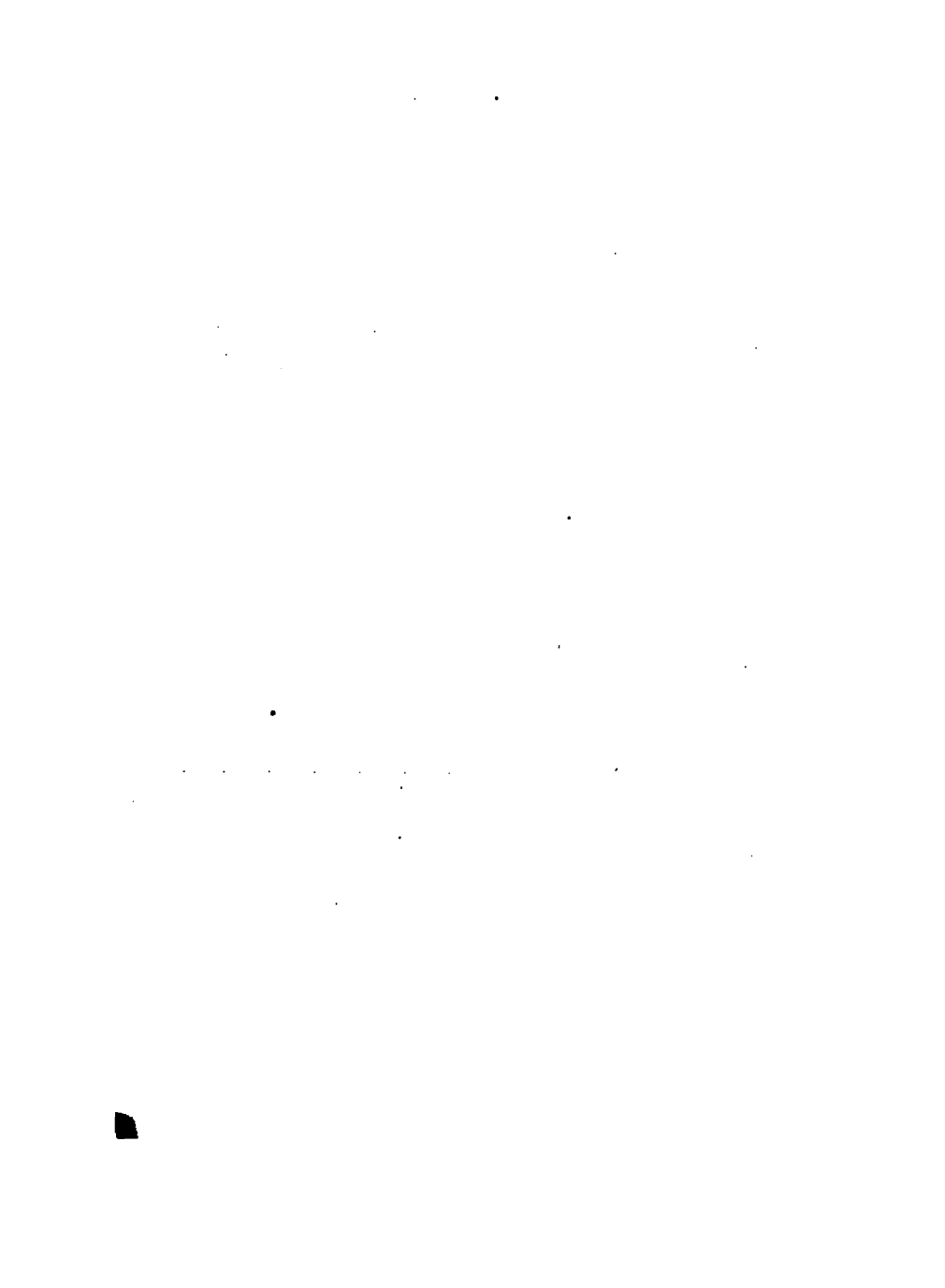
NEARLY all the following pieces were written more
than twenty years ago.

J. R. F.

EDINBURGH, *March* 1874.

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A VERNAL ODE.

AGAIN the Sun, that slumbered,
By veiling mists encumbered—
Or with lessened lustre wheeled his daily round—
Shines as with new glory crowned ;
From his golden hair
Through the freshened air
Shakes a richer radiance on the glancing ground.

Winter joys are blighted
By the winter frost ;
In all that then delighted
Something then was lost.
With a duller tide life's courses roll,
The shade of death hangs darkly o'er the dial of the soul,
And ever on our pathway broods a solemn gloom,
While through the year's deep valley we journey towards
the tomb.

Now the cloud is passing, and the air is clear,
To fuller, happier life our hearts awake again,

A VERNAL ODE.

When, through the opening vista of the year
 Gazing, the hopeful eye beholds
The blossom and the fruit the purpling bud enfolds ;
 And greets the homely daisies that early star the plain,
 As heralds of the hours
 When all the garden bowers
And each uncultured corner of Nature's wide domain
Shall sparkle in the splendour of a thousand flowers.
 Joys to come the spirit cheer ;
 Summer's golden prime,
 Autumn's mellow time,
In the sudden sunshine of the Spring appear.

Nature moves within us with a subtle power ;
 The falling of the leaf
 Touches our thoughts to grief,
And again the spirit gladdens at the opening of the flower.
 Man, soul-endowed, of heritage divine,
 Yet, fashioned from the common clay,
 Must with his fellow-creatures share
 The influence of the common air.
He feels a stronger pulse within his bosom play,
When the reviving breath of Heaven
Anew to earth a living soul hath given ;
And his heart, like hers, rejoices, his face, like hers,
doth shine.

A VERNAL ODE.

A lighter gleam moves on the sullen sea,
A livelier green lights up the spreading lea ;
 The fresh grass softly waves
 O'er gladsome fields, and quiet graves.
The song of waters loud and clear
Swells through the willows flush with feathery bloom ;
 Again the birds are voiceful in the grove ;
 And long-imprisoned bees
 Hum in the budding trees,
Their busy murmur bringing glad July to the ear.
O'er earth the unbound zephyrs move
With primrose or with violet's faint perfume—
 Such simple blossoms now their sweetness shed
 By wild-wood side, or garden bed ;
Here homely daffodil bursts into golden flame,
 There, nestling lowly, see
 A gentle flower, with a gentle name,
 Anemone.

Gather with reverent hand the firstlings of the Spring !
 Cherish the thoughts they bring !
Faint though their fragrance, brief their hour,
 These fragile things have power,
Read with the eye and heart discerning,
To teach us lessons of divinest learning :
 Each is a silent token
 That the blessings are renewed,

A VERNAL ODE.

In the great promise spoken
When first in Heaven stood
The arch of hope above the assuaging flood—
Nature shall evermore her equal course maintain,
Of the seedtime and the harvest, the sunshine and the
rain.

Mourn not that olden fable is decayed ;
What though no more to every sun-lit glade
Comes Pan to revel with his joyous train,
No white-limbed naiads glad or fount or stream,
And fled the nymphs from grove, and hill, and plain ?
Though dimmed the glories of the classic dream,
Beauty and freshness have not passed away ;
Bright is the sunshine of this later day,
Clear are its waters, and its meadows green.

These petty deities for ever gone,
The Greater and Diviner ONE
Hath still in Nature's temple his abode ;
His tranquil presence fills the ample scene,
Inspires a nobler worship, simpler rites serene,
When the full heart reposes on the great thought of God.

Man cannot look upon his Maker's face
And live ; of mercy is it that afar,
The insufferable glory is withdrawn,
And we His Being in his works must trace.

A VERNAL ODE.

The light of many a star,
That on us beams so mildly clear,
Pours from a blazing sun whose nearer dawn
Would scorch the hapless earth to desolation drear.

But blest the pure in heart who can perceive,
On the fair world in which we live,
A solemn lustre not its own—
A light reflected from the central throne.
Through the great veil they seem to see
The ever-present Deity—
Trace angel flights across the silvery sphere—
And while this common earth they tread,
Amid the whisperings of the trees can hear
The still small voice of God, and they are not afraid.

The soul revives with the reviving year,
A fresher faith the doubt-chilled bosom warms,
Nearer we feel the everlasting arms
That bear us up through all our seasons here,
Till day celestial, full of light, we gain ;
Wake from our winter to the Heavenly Spring,
Whose cloudless sunshine endless joys shall bring
And large and calm delights unchecked by mortal pain.



ODE TO AUTUMN.

COME, golden Autumn ! gladden once again
Our spirits with thine all-abundant store !
Resume thy brief but ever-welcome reign,
And shed thy blessings on our grateful shore.
Uniter of the seasons ! winter treads
With frosty footsteps on thy day's extremes,
Pale morn, and moonlit eve ; while summer sheds
Upon thy noontide hours her brightest beams
Of the full sunshine in unclouded streams.

Yet is thy coolness not the winter cold,
Thy warmth is mellow than the summer heat,
A genial balmy air ! and when unrolled
Are thy full treasures, oh how richly sweet
Thy varied fruitage ! Wild lip-staining berries
Nestle amid old Earth's green carpeting ;
Brown hazel-nuts, luscious self-planted cherries,
And acorns plump, to upper branches cling ;
With the wide orchard's fruity offering.

ODE TO AUTUMN.

Return ! and bring with thee thy harvest-moon,
And reapers garnering the fallen corn
Beneath its placid light ; the broken tune
Of passing words upon the night-air borne,
Falling on distant ear like the clear noise
Of pebbles dropped into a quiet pool.
Or when in song the maidens raise their voice,
Of tender thoughts each rustic heart is full,
And warm looks glow beneath the moonlight cool.

And many flowers hast thou of thousand hues,
Though thy full beauty hath no need of these,
Lent by thy sister summer ; for the dews,
Night-frozen on the thickly foliaged trees,
Add countless colours to their fading green,
Robing with purples the departing year ;
Though he ungrateful rends with breezes keen
His royal garment ere his end is near ;
Yet the shed leaves lie thickly on his bier.

And sweet it is at eventide to stray
Through new-shorn fields, crushing with careless feet
The rugged stubble—startling on our way
The timid hare, who leaves her quiet seat,
And shelter seeks amid the heathy glade,
Where she may calmly rest and browse at will.
But soon the landscape gains a darker shade,

ODE TO AUTUMN.

More loudly seems to rush the swollen rill,
And thickening mists creep slowly up the hill.

What though a sadness stealeth through our hearts

When on thy mingled loveliness we gaze !

If thy sharp wind a wintry chill imparts,

Then turn we inwards to the social blaze,

The kindled lamp, the group of smiling friends,

And all the blessings of home-happiness.

Welcome, sweet Autumn ! for in thee there blends

All such delight. Vainly would we express

Thy gentle melancholy joyfulness !





SUNBEAMS.

SUNBEAMS ! bright fraternity !
Messengers from upper sky !
O ! how many blessings came
With your sweet, unscorching flame,
When its silent glory flow'd
Full at the one Word of God
On the freshly-moulded Earth,
Heaving in its chaos-birth.

And these joys are falling still ;
Nor will cease to flow, until
That great Word by which ye came
Shall the dread command proclaim,
“ Ye have run your stated course ; ”
And the sun, your parent-source,
Shall be quench'd, from heaven shrinking,
Rayless in his socket sinking.

Lo ! at morn, ye, faintly shining,
Fringe as with a gilded lining
Night's dark robe, as fast she flies

SUNBEAMS.

From your warm embrace ; the skies
Meanwhile greet with brightest dyes
You, whom blessings aye attend,
Whereso'er your glances bend.
Then, when ye, with ardent lip,
Dew from offering flow'rets sip—
Scatter on the wavy sea
Gems of matchless brilliancy—
Heavy mists from hill-tops roll,
Gladdening the shepherd's soul—
Gently gild, with slanting ray,
Rocky peak or ruin grey—
Gloomy city's crowds awake,
And the dreamer's visions break—
When ye rouse the insect throng,
With the birds in voiceful song,
While the morning incense floats
Upwards with their praising notes—
Wonder we at fables told
Of the Memnon image old ?
Doth not wide Earth, statue-like,
Sing, when ye upon it strike ?

Next at noon supreme ye reign,
Filling hill and vale and plain ;
Blazing on the gilded wall
Of the stately palace hall ;

SUNBEAMS.

Painting on cathedral floor
Quaint old windows' tinted lore ;
Tracing on the cottage hearth
Latticed panes ; and thoughts of mirth
Darting into silent cells
Where the sadden'd captive dwells.

Labour-ending eve draws near ;
Then with slanting looks ye peer,
'Neath the foliaged, drooping eaves,
Brightening the under-leaves ;
Or through covering branches flit
Down where quiet lovers sit,
Suddenly, with entrance rude,
Startling their sweet solitude,
While the maiden's cheek may flush
With a brighter, deeper blush,
Shamed that even you should guess
Their world-hidden happiness.
But the lark now nestward flies,
Slumber seals the weary eyes,
Night and darkness hold again
For a time their ancient reign.

Morn and eve your handmaids fair,
Thus attend you everywhere ;

SUNBEAMS.

Morning tells ye come, and eve
Soothes our sadness when ye leave.
But your brightness never fades,
Ne'er is dimmed by dusking shades,
Round the world still changeless ye
Pass in placid majesty ;
Though ye may have changes brought,
'Mid them all ye alter not.

Ye through all the seasons run,
Playful offspring of the sun !
Early spring's sharp wind you seize,
Changing it to zephyr-breeze ;
Breathe ye on the summer rose,
And its heart-hid sweets disclose ;
Or make ripe to inmost core
Juicy fruits for autumn's store ;
And when sternest winter reigns,
Ye can break his frost-bound chains,
Bid the pendant icicle
From the thatch in splinters fall,
Or the snowy mantle glide
Heavily down the steep hill-side.

Visitors of every land—
Every clime ! on desert sand

SUNBEAMS.

Swart Arabians prostrate lie
Veiled in worship, when on high
You up-start through cloudless sky ;
Or, in northern realms afar,
See the skin-clad Laplander
From his dark and dazzled sight
Shading the unwonted light
Of your golden locks unshorn
On his single yearly morn.
But oh, why forbear to cheer
Six long moons that chilly sphere ?—
Save perchance the lights that fly
Oft athwart the darken'd sky,
And a fitful radiance fling,
Are stray sunbeams wandering ?

Welcome ever then to me
Will your gentle visits be,
Coming when and how ye may ;
At morn, or eve, or full noonday ;
Pouring flood-like from on high
With unshaded brilliancy,
Or as swiftly-fleeting things,
Like the sweep of angel's wings.
Earth, without your brightening gold,
Always in night-blackness rolled,

SUNBEAMS.

Would be dismal, cold, and vile,
As a face without a smile,
As a body, soulless, dead,
Or as heart of love devoid.
Constant then be aye your way
Blessed ministers of day !
Ever speeding through the sky
Glances of the Deity !





LINES

ON A PICTURE OF "THE ENTERKIN," BY
GEORGE HARVEY, *P.R.S.A.*

BEAUTIFUL vision of the grassy hills !

Bathed in the brightness of the summer sun !
Methinks I hear the murmur of the rills

That through thy tranquil bosom gently run—
Or listen to the solitary cry
Of raven journeying through the distant sky.

The bleating of the scattered sheep—the hum

Of wandering bee—the silvery stir that creeps
Through the long grass—all sweetly whispering come

Now on my fancy's ear ; my spirit sleeps

To all around me—rather it elopes

To dwell in gladness 'mid these sunny slopes.

LINES, ETC.

In such a glen as this, on such a day,
A poet might in solitude recline,
And, while the hours unheeded stole away,
Gather rich fancies in the art divine—
Great thoughts that float through Nature's silent air,
And fill the soul with hope, and love, and prayer !

In such a glen as this, in olden days,
Might Scotland's persecuted sons have met
To hear the Word of God, and sing His praise ;
At morning when the grass with dew was wet,
Or when the evening clouds gave grateful shade,
Breaking the Bread of Life in awe and dread.

Oh, happy Art !—that thus our thoughts can wean
From the dull routine of our daily care ;
Leading us forth to such a lovely scene,
To breathe a sweeter, more celestial air !
And happy Genius ! dedicating Art
To elevate the soul, and cheer the weary heart !





A WINTER EVENING INCIDENT.

To_____

WHEN in a sportive hour, sweet maid ! you tried,
My features—shadowed on the wall—to trace ;
The while your cheek had almost touched my face,
Or your white hand close to my lips would glide,
I wished that I long moments so might stand,
And only move at last to kiss that little hand !

There were *two* portraits taken then : the one
At best a shadowy outline, dark and faint ;
The other clear, and warm, and eloquent.
For, ere thy task thou could'st have well begun,
Love finish'd his, and on my heart imprest
Thy likeness, which shall there for ever rest !



A LOVE DITTY.

ONCE this troubled heart of mine
Roamed as free and gay
As a floating butterfly
On a summer day ;
Looking with a passing joy
On each pretty face,
Seeking not and caring not
For a resting-place.
But on a day the flowers—
The lily and the rose—
Blooming on my Mary's cheeks
Stirred my soul's repose ;
And no more with buoyant wing
Can my fancy roam—
There it ever hovers,
Seeking for a home !

But when the happy butterfly,
Fluttering through the air,

A LOVE DITTY.

Spies the loveliest blossom,
Quickly flies he there,
And on its sun-warmed bosom
Gladly he may rest ;
Ah ! that I might so repose
On *her* wavy breast.

Her raven-shaded ringlets
Round my heart-strings twine,
Like the clinging tendrils
Of the loving vine.
Her floating eyes beam gently
With a tranquil power,
While her pretty little mouth
Opens like a flower.
And when the music of her voice,
Stealing through her smiles,
Crown'd her rich possessions
Of unconscious wiles—
The thrill, the subtle tremor,
That quivered through my frame,
Marked the sudden kindling
Of a quenchless flame !



BEAUTY AND EXPRESSION.

I do not care for those mere picture-faces
That look upon one as from forth a frame,
And which, though met in twenty different places,
Are everywhere and evermore the same.

Give me the eyes that may with tears o'erflow,
Or eyebrows that may frown—if there's occasion ;
Cheeks that with dimpling smiles can warmly glow
In all the living beauty of expression.

I can forego a skin of pearly whiteness,
Pardon a nose not strictly Greek or Roman,
And don't expect that a perpetual brightness
Dwells in the eyes of any mortal woman ;

Yet I should hope within them to behold
Sweet shades of kindly feeling ever straying,
While o'er her lips, though not of classic mould,
Unconscious smiles should oft be calmly playing.

BEAUTY AND EXPRESSION.

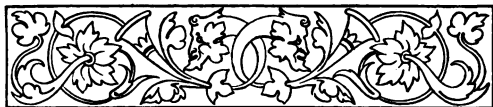
A little paint may give a bright complexion,
Or art supply the most luxuriant hair,
But nought can e'er bestow that sweet reflection
Of a pure mind my fair one's face should wear.

The soul, itself ethereal, most esteems
The loveliness akin to its own nature—
And of mere outward beauty little deems
To mind that glows and speaks in every feature.

In short, I do not seek some peerless beauty,
With sculptured charms and graces superhuman,
But something fitter far for earthly duty—
A loving, pleasing, kind, and thoughtful woman.

For when with years mere outward fairness ceases
To charm the heart with the old glad emotion,
The beauty of expression still increases,
And fills the soul with ever-fresh devotion.





LINES

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE, BY JAMES ECKFORD
LAUDER, ENTITLED "WHAT SHALL I SAY?"

WHAT shall I say?—I scarce may tell
The thoughts which through my bosom steal;
It were not wise, it were not well,
That maiden rashly should reveal
The varied feelings, hopes, and fears,
Which with strange tumult fill her soul,
When love therein his throne uprears,
And rules impatient of control.

Nor would I play the light coquette,
Still meaning *yes*, while saying *no*;
He knows I love him dearly, yet
I would not ever tell him so.
He fondly of my beauty speaks,
Extols the lustre of mine eye,
And vows my dainty lips and cheeks
For ever through his fancy fly.

WHAT SHALL I SAY!

Were we together, we should find
No lack of ways to speak our bliss,
By glances we should tell the mind,
And seal mute letters with a kiss.
But with the pen, I shrink to say
That he is good, and dear to me ;
Man's potent charm is flattery—
To hear, the woman's part should be.

He tells me he for me would die ;
To serve him I my life would yield,
Although I may not say that I
For him would warlike weapons wield ;
Yet I could wait, and watch, and love,
With woman's tenderness and care—
Anticipate each wish—remove
What griefs I could—and others share.

.
The waning moon says dawn is near,
My lamp's dim rays the tale repeat,
And yet no words of love appear
Upon this often-fingered sheet.
The hours unmarked have passed away
In sweet yet fruitless reverie ;
And babblers will to-morrow say
That I in love or sick must be.

WHAT SHALL I SAY!

The pallid cheek and heavy eye
My want of slumber will reveal,
How should they jeer, could they descry
Wherefore the hours from sleep I steal!
Must I my tender task defer?
Write none to-night? Oh, happy thought,
Often a ringlet of my hair
Has he by way of love-gift sought.

Now it shall be my messenger,
A silent yet a speaking token;
And thence he truly may infer
My love unchanged—my faith unbroken.
And though no word will meet his eye,
Yet if he be in truth love-smitten,
Fond fancy surely will supply
The good, kind things I *might* have written.





THE LOST IDEAL.

WEARINESS is coming o'er me,
Weariness of life and day !
For the joy that went before me,
Long ago hath fled away.

Vanished is the golden vision
That before me ever shone ;
And the form of lustrous beauty
That delighted me is gone !

Early Fancy, still creating
Thoughts of loveliness and light,
Wrought them to the glorious image
Of a being pure and bright.

And she shone with rarest graces,
Graces gathered from afar,
In the rich and ample regions
Where the spirit's treasures are.

THE LOST IDEAL.

Gems of thought were hung around her,
Jewels that the soul had won
In the stillness of the midnight,
In the glory of the sun.

And with bright unfading flowers,
Culled from the enchanted ground,
Where the poets dwell immortal,
Was her glowing forehead crowned.

Full of calm and tender meaning
Was each smile that lit her face,
All her words were full of music,
All her motions full of grace.

O the cheerfulness of morning !
O the gladness of the day !—
Evermore in joy returning
Ere that vision passed away !

It is gone. And since the halo
Of her presence faded far—
Slowly faded as at day-dawn
Wanes the radiance of a star—

Keenly, amid mortal fair ones,
Have I sought her day by day—
But no living forehead lightens
With the clear celestial ray !

THE LOST IDEAL.

Through no earth-born eyes the beaming
Of the star-like light appears,
And the wished-for blessing comes not
With the slowly passing years.

Weariness hath fallen o'er me,
Weariness of light and day!
For the joy that went before me,
Long ago hath fled away!





A BACHELOR'S REVERIE.

How sweet when at twilight, in solitude sitting,
Tired, wistful, and dull, by my bachelor fire,
Cold reason, awhile her dominion remitting,
Gives wing to fond fancy and foolish desire !

Then visions arise of the bride that shall bless me,
If with love Heaven shall crown all the blessings of
earth ;
And while shadowy arms of beauty caress me,
Fair dream-children smile round my desolate hearth.

My desolate hearth ! Ah, when shall *she* cheer it ?
The wife of the future, my love that shall be !
I long for her advent, yet know not if near it
Or summer or winter be carrying me.

It may be, alas ! my too catholic fancy,
Admiring alike the most varying charms,
From gorgeous Georgina to neat little Nancy,
May fail to draw any of all to my arms.

A BACHELOR'S REVERIE.

My love ! Is she still in her nursery playing,
Scarce free from the mild moral rule of the rod ?
Or is she widow whose friends have been laying
My poor predecessor to-day 'neath the sod ?

Mayhap she may come from a fair and a far land,
Where the pulses beat high in the sun of the south ;
Where with roses Love weaves his voluptuous garland,
And kisses, like ginger, are hot i' the mouth.

Yet, likelier far, if haply I mate me
With one who in trial and joy truly shares,
Here, in the next street, the angel may wait me—
My goddess descend by the first pair of stairs.

Then shall she be lofty, and lovely, and vain,
A beauty bewitching, capriciously kind ?
Or shall she be simple, and dumpy, and plain,
Enchanting alone by the charms of the mind ?

Or, shall she be gentle—a creature whose graces
And virtues are homely ; whose principal pride
Is honour domestic : whose happiest place is
The hearth and the board of her guardian and guide ?

And where shall I meet her ?—at luncheon, or dinner,
At pic-nic or card-party, concert or ball ?

A BACHELOR'S REVERIE.

In some glad shady grove shall I woo her and win her,
Or gravely propose in an afternoon call ?

.

Ah, foolish Alnaschar ! awake to be humbled
To thyself, though from visions of soberest birth !
Thy book, thy best friend, from thy fingers hath tumbled,
And the ashes are cold on thy bachelor hearth !

St. Valentine's Eve, 1856.





BURNS. ·

CENTENARY VERSES—1859.

WHAT though the sour of soul may scorn
Our tribute to the Poet's name !
Brighter and clearer shall his fame
Shine each returning natal morning. 2

His faults were mortal, and they passed
With him repentant to his grave.
Not ours to judge, to whom he gave
His deathless genius. Hold we fast

The memory of that man of men ;
Shielded in honour's citadel ;
And in our strong love guarded well,
From spite of petty tongue or pen.

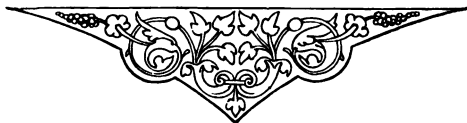
Themselves they honour who to him
Accord with zeal a generous praise.
Themselves alone do those abase
Who think his lustrous fame to dim

BURNS.

By slanderous breath. But let them rail ;
While through his own loved land his song
Is echoed all its vales along
Shall whispers o'er that strain prevail ?

Of no mean land was Burns a son ;
And greater is his land of Burns.
'Tis well that with one heart she turns
Proudly to offer now to one

Of many heroes she hath borne
The chiefest crown ; her dearest name,
Her Bard's ; and sacred to his fame
To hail his hundredth natal morn.





KINELLAN.

(A JEU D'ESPRIT.)

You bid me say, had I my way,
Where I should choose to dwell in ;
Without delay, by night or day,
I'd answer, "at Kinellan."

Just think ! amid the rubs and shocks
Of this dull world, I fell in
With Lady Coxe, and pleasant folks,
And jokes, at gay Kinellan.

Good luck is thine, if asked to dine,
You'll need no close compellin',
For meats most fine, and drinks divine,
Draw guests to warm Kinellan.

To meet you there, are ladies fair
As ere was Homer's Helen ;
And wits that shine, when warmed with wine,
And welcome, at Kinellan.

KINELLAN.

"Rab and his Friends" that board attends ;
Ardmillan, stories tellin' ;
At Blackie's "chaff" the hearty laugh
Goes circling at Kinellan.

Let Burns of "Bonnie Lesley" boast,
No doubt she was a belle in
The poet's time : I'd rather toast
Her daughter at Kinellan.

Sir James the Rose, and other beaux,
Old times were very well in ;
But now no better fellow goes
Than our Sir James, Kinellan.

About "the Coming Man" men rave,
The name there is a spell in ;
But, spell it with a *u*, you have
Him here, at kind Kinellan.

In all those parts three better hearts,
With kindlier feelings swellin',
Could ne'er be found ; 'tis hallowed ground
They bloom in, at Kinellan.

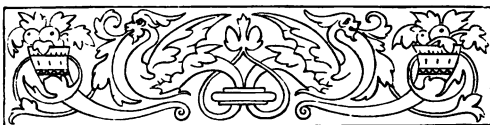
KINELLAN.

That "doctors differ" oft, I ween,
We're told when bells are knellin';
There's never difference between
Our doctors at Kinellan.

How good a thing is unity
For brethren to dwell in!
But brothers with a sister we
See linked in loving trinity
At wonderful Kinellan.

Christmas 1873.





TARBERT, LOCHFYNE.

THE mountains closely compass thee around,
Thou chosen home of rough seafaring men !
Securely hidden in thy little glen,
Far from the crowded city's ceaseless sound,
Thou sittest calm and peaceful. At thy feet
The boisterous waters rage not, but lie bound
As with a spell, as tranquil and as sweet
As favoured lake amid enchanted ground.
Gladly the fisherman will welcome thee ;
By storm o'ertaken at the close of day,
He turns the rock, and leaves the angry sea,
Gaining the shelter of thy waveless bay ;
And there, though late by fiercest tempests
driven,
He sinks to rest, and dreams of Peace and
Heaven.



SONNET.

IN Eden's happy vale when Adam prest
The freshly-fashioned lips of blooming Eve,
Say, did not Love their glowing bosoms heave,
As tenderly each other they caressed ?
Yes ! of the passions, Love—first-born and
best—
Alone in early Paradise did reign !
Despair and Hate, and all the darker train,
Came but with Satan to that garden blest.
And when sin-darkness on creation fell,
Least dimmed of all was Love's ethereal beam ;
And still it shines in purity, and well
To fallen man prolongs the Eden dream.
Then wonder not that heaven-born poets dwell
With rapture ever on the kindred theme.



SONNET.

SOMETIMES in the long line of daily faces
We in our life-walk pass unheeded by
Comes one that sudden wakes the idle eye
Into delight. The blessed vision chases
Our dull habitual mood, with fresh light graces
The common things that round about us lie,
And, haply lingering, charms the memory
Till stern cold Time the impress fair effaces.

Seen but for some brief moments yesterday,
Such loveliness, O fair Unknown, was thine !
And so hath cheered my thoughts ; nor word nor
glance
We interchanged ; nor evermore perchance
Shall meet ; but choicest blessings on thee shine !
Peace, love, and virtue, gild thy paths alway !



SONNET.

WHEN the chilled season moves with leaden pace
In dull mid-winter, it will chance a ray
Of clear soft sunshine lightens up the day,
Lending it something of a summer grace.
So beamed on my sad heart thy fair sweet face,
Brightening its gloom as with an hour of May.
And must the blessing transient pass away,
As darkening clouds the winter sunshine chase ?

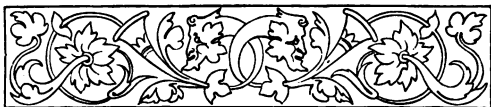
The summer, past and coming, both have power
To gild the else dark vista of our years ;
And if I dare not reckon that glad hour
As foretaste of a line of lightsome peers,
Fond memory may delight in the brief while
My loveless soul warmed to thy sunny smile.



SONNET.

LADY ! thou art too lovely for the cold
And guarded homage of this latter time.
Thou should'st have lived and triumphed in the
prime
And pride of chivalry, when champions bold
Woo'd boldly ; or, yet better, in the old
Free days of nymphs and swains—for beauty gained
A warm and open worship unrestrained
In the bright, unreturning Age of Gold !

Yes ! I can fancy on a sunny plain
A maiden sits, the while a shepherd boy
With lingering hand a wreath of cool green vines
Amid her golden-tinted curls entwines ;
Thee the kind maid—and ah ! presumptuous joy,
Myself I dream the glad attendant swain !



SONNET.

HAPPY the wife, who in the ready love
Of husband and of children dwells secure !
Her ways are honoured and her crown is sure.
But not less certain blessings from above
On her chaste head shall fall, who to remove
From the paternal roof—by Duty's voice
Detained—declines ; though haply in the choice
Stern trial of the heart be hers to prove.

And such good part, fair Violet, is thine !
Nor art thou even now without reward,
Conscience approves thee, and the warm regard
Hast thou of all good hearts that love to come
To the bright circle where thy virtues shine—
Sunlight and solace of thy father's home.



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